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## CORNELL MEN AND FIREMEN DIE IN FIRE

### Appalling Disaster Occurs on the Cornell University Grounds at Ithaca, N. Y.

## SEVEN PERISHED IN THE FLAMES

### Chi Psi Fraternity House Burned Early Yesterday Morning—The Volun- teer Firemen Killed Were All Prom- inent Residents of Ithaca—Damage Will Amount to \$200,000.

(By Associated Press.)  
ITHACA, N. Y., Dec. 7.—Seven persons met a tragic death this morning in the worst disaster that ever befell Cornell University when the Chi Psi fraternity house was burned. Three of the victims were volunteer firemen of the city of Ithaca and four were students of Cornell University. The firemen all were of this city. They were: A. S. Robinson, attorney; John Rumsey, hardware merchant; Esty Landon, salesman. The students were: O. L. Schmuck, Hanover, Pa.; F. W. Greele, South Orange, N. J.; W. H. Nichols, Chicago; J. M. McCutchen, Pittsburg.

Schnuck got out of the building, but he went back for his room mate Nichols, and in the attempt to rescue his comrade, he was so seriously injured that he died in the hospital. One student C. J. Pope, freshman, of East Orange, N. J., was seriously injured and three others were slightly injured. They are: R. R. Powers, a senior of Atlanta, Ga.; W. W. Goetz, a sophomore of Milwaukee, Wis., and H. M. Curry, Jr., a sophomore of Pittsburg.

Rumsey, Landon and Robinson, the Ithaca volunteer firemen, had managed to lay a train of hose on the north side of the house when the wall tottered. There was a cry of alarm, and several men standing near managed to get out of the way, but the three named were caught under the mass of debris and killed.

Flames Spread Rapidly.  
A few minutes after the flames were discovered the Chi Psi chapter house was all ablaze. The flames were fanned by a strong northwest wind, and the students were trapped in the dormitory on the third floor. Many of the boys jumped to safety while those who hesitated were carried to the ground by the falling walls.

No alarm was turned in until half an hour after the fire had been discovered and it was half an hour later before the volunteer fire department could get to work. There was a long climb from the lower part of the city to the college grounds and by the time the firemen arrived the interior of the building was almost burned out. They could do nothing but prevent the adjoining buildings from taking fire.

Loss Is Heavy.  
The money loss is nearly \$200,000. The original cost of the building erected by Mrs. Jennie McGraw Fiske was \$150,000 and extensive interior decorations had been made since. The cause of the fire is unknown though it is suspected that it started in the kitchen. Cornell university is appalled by the terrible catastrophe and academic work is almost suspended. The burned building was built by Jennie McGraw Fiske, the benefactor of Cornell, whose will was contested by her husband, Professor Willard Fiske. Mrs. Fiske died abroad seeking help for an incurable disease and never entered her beautiful mansion alive, but her body was taken there for her funeral.

## AIRSHIP ONLY WAY TO POLE, HE AVERS

### Walter Wellman, Answering Peary, Says Experience Has Proved the Futility of a Sled Route.

NEW YORK, Dec. 7.—Walter Wellman who sailed for France on the Lorraine, of the French line, to superintend the reconstruction of his airship, the America, paid his respects to Robert E. Peary, who he had understood, had criticized the attempt to be made by Mr. Wellman and his associate to reach the pole by balloon. "I see that Mr. Peary says he has no faith in airships for Arctic research and exploration," said Mr. Wellman. "Well, personally I have no faith in sledging parties, the method so far used in the search for the pole. It is not unnatural to have small faith in another man's schemes, but in this case I know something about sledging and Mr. Peary, so far as I am advised, is an authority on sledging only and knows nothing about airships. I have formed my opinion of sledging by practical experience. "I shall return here next spring and sail for the base of my expedition in

Spitzbergen in April, there to complete all arrangements. The start for the pole will be made at the latter end of August."

## CAPT. BOUTWELL SAYS HE IS MUCH DELIGHTED

### Defeat of the Littlefield Bill is Especially Gratifying to the Hampton Roads Pilots.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7.—The result of the fight on the Littlefield anti-compulsory pilotage bill in the house yesterday, when the Pilots Association of the United States succeeded in killing the measure by a large vote, is gratifying to Captain Boutwell and other Norfolk pilots who have been fighting the bill steadily for years. Should the bill have passed, Norfolk would at once have become a free port and American sailing ships would have been permitted to enter that port without the necessity of employing pilots to carry them in. That would have wrecked the business of the pilots employed at that place and would doubtless have driven them from their calling. Captain Boutwell and other Norfolk men who have fought hard for the defeat of the bill are delighted with their success and are grateful to the members of the Virginia delegation and others who assisted them in their fight.

## Death of Mrs. Miles.

Mrs. Elizabeth Miles died yesterday morning at 11:50 o'clock after an illness of five days with pneumonia at her home, 331 Forty-fourth street. Mrs. Miles was 74 years of age. She is survived by four children—Messrs. Thomas B. and James Miles and Mrs. E. J. Haines and Mrs. Ida B. Dillingham. Funeral services will be conducted at the residence this afternoon at 4:30 o'clock by Rev. A. O. Sykes. The body will be sent to Baltimore for interment.

## LAND GRABBERS IN NET

### Salt Lake, Utah, Grand Jury Bring in Indictments.

## BILLS AGAINST BIG RAILROADS

### Harriman and Gould Lines Are Mix- ed Up But No Names Given Out— It is Only Beginning of Unmasking Gigantic Frauds.

(By Associated Press.)  
SALT LAKE, CITY, UTAH, Dec. 7.—The federal grand jury that is investigating coal frauds in Utah and charges that railroad corporations have discriminated against certain speculators, made a partial report today. Indictments were returned against the Union Pacific, the Oregon Short Line railroads, the Union Pacific Coal company, the Utah Fuel company and several high officials representing the Harriman and Gould corporations in Utah. Two other indictments, charging perjury before the grand jury were also returned. The names of the persons accused in these indictments are withheld.

After the grand jury had adjourned assistant Attorney General Maynard of Washington stated that when it reconvenes the inquiry will be resumed. The indictments returned today, he said, mark the beginning of the government's probing in Utah and Wyoming the indictments are only incidents of a gigantic system of fraud that has been in operation in the west for many years.

## Mr. Finley in Charge.

(By Associated Press.)  
WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 7.—W. W. Finley, recently chosen president to succeed the late Samuel Spencer, president of the Southern railway, assumed the active duties of his office today and will make his headquarters in this city. The policies of the late president will be carried out and no material change in the system or the personnel on any of the roads are contemplated by Mr. Finley.

## PROMINENT WASHINGTON MAN MEETS SUDDEN DEATH

### John Cropper, Well Known Re- tired Lawyer, Accidentally As- phyxiated at His Home.

(By Associated Press.)  
WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 7.—Accidental asphyxiation is given as the cause of the death at his home in this city of John Cropper, a retired lawyer, who was prominent in club and social life in the national capital. His wife who is in New York is the daughter of the late Robert McLane, at one time Minister to France. Mr. Cropper was 56 years old. He was a member of Society of the Cincinnati and of the Society of War of 1812.

## ALLOW STATES TO BAR PRISON MADE GOODS

### House of Representatives Passes a Bill Which Many Manu- factures Desired.

## STATES CAN NOW LEGISLATE

### The Old Inter-State Law Allowed Penitentiary Goods into the State Whether People Wanted Them or Not But the Hunt Bill Removes This Objectionable Feature.

(By Associated Press.)  
WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 7.—During the three hours the house was in session it passed a bill which has the endorsement of labor as well as manufacturers generally, repealing the portion of the Wilson interstate commerce bill, relating to convict-made goods and permitting the several states to legislate for themselves as to their competition with "free labor" made goods.

The bill was introduced by Mr. Hunt. (Mo) himself, a practical stone mason. Under the Wilson bill which became a law in 1890, convict labor made goods may enter into active competition with the goods manufactured by free labor, and under this federal law a state could not pass a law that would prevent the shipping into the state prison-made goods of other states. The law which was passed today abrogates the interstate commerce law as it at present is applied to convict made goods, thereby affording the right to prohibit the shipping of convict made goods within the confines of any state or territory. Mr. Hunt asked for its passage not only in the interest of free labor, but in the interest of manufacturers. He said it would be an attempt to curb the criminal competition of the penitentiary with the free labor of the country.

"It is cruel to ask free labor of this country to maintain its citizenship, its dignity and its self respect if it has to wait until the product of the state prison is sold before the employer can get a reasonable price for his honestly manufactured products." The vote on the bill was practically unanimous.

### Knock on Simplified Spelling Simplified spelling received a hard blow today in the bill for 1908 reported to the house by the com- mittee on appropriations which says: "In printing documents authorized by law or ordered by congress or either branch thereof the govern- ment printing office shall follow the rules of orthography as established by Webster's or any other generally accepted dictionaries of the English language."

The bill carries an appropriation of \$31,215.25, which is \$685,842 less than the estimates made for the judicial and executive departments of the government.

### Some Other Measures Passed.

An increase from \$1.20 to \$1.40 is made in the allowance to members on house for clerks hire, and the requirement that members certify they have spent this amount is omitted.

Efforts to take up the bill conferring citizenship upon the Chinese of Porto Rico, reported from the committee on insular affairs of house, were defeated by objections of the Democrats.

Representative Southwick introduced a bill today increasing the salaries of all civil service employees ten per cent.

## Abe Attel Beats Watto.

(By Associated Press.)  
LOS ANGELES, Dec. 7.—Abe Attel of Los Angeles, knocked out Jimmy Watto of Boston in the eighth round of a finish fight for the welter weight championship here tonight. The contest was fast. Attel having the advantage from the start. Tommy Burns was the referee.

## CALIFORNIA TOWNS HAVE EARTHQUAKE

### Slight Tremors of the Earth Shakes Dishes From Shelves But Does No Serious Damage.

(By Associated Press.)  
SAN LUI, OBISHO, CAL., Dec. 7.—At 10:40 o'clock last night this city experienced an earthquake which lasted more than thirty seconds. The shock was from north to south. Half an hour later a second shock was felt but was not so pronounced as the first. These earthquakes also was felt at San Luis Maria Guadalupe and Ambria. At the latter place articles were shaken from shelves. No perceptible damage was sustained here.

## DONAGILMAN'S SLAYER MAKES A CONFESSION

### His Name is Curtis and he is a Half Witted Resident of Dayton, Ohio.

## TELLS STORY OF THE CRIME

### After Accomplishing His Brutal Pur- pose and Murdering the Girl He Was Filled With Remorse and Cried— Went Over Scene of the Crime With Dayton Detectives.

(By Associated Press.)  
DAYTON, OHIO, Dec. 7.—A half-witted resident of this city today confessed to the murder of Donna Gilman, 20 years old, who was criminally assaulted and strangled to death on November 20, while within fifty yards of her home at Arlington Heights, a suburb, while returning from work. The girl's reputation was unassailed and the brutality of the crime aroused the greatest feeling. Employees at the factory where she worked subscribed \$4,000 as a reward for the capture of the murderer. Though the employer of David Curtis furnished a complete alibi for him, a formal charge of murder has been placed against Curtis by a brother of the girl. The arrest was swiftly followed by a succession of scenes of a sensational character.

This afternoon accompanied by detectives and the coroner, Curtis was taken to the scene of the tragedy and there traced his movements step by step as he told how he approached and attacked his victim, how he took hold of her umbrella in one hand and seized her by the throat with his fingers of the other and dragged her up the embankment for a distance of twenty feet. He asserted that he then closed the umbrella and cast it to one side, while still holding the girl by the throat. After she was dead he said that he was filled with remorse and knelt by the body and cried. Then he took the body in his arms and carried it across the street and placed it in the position in which it was found later.

## SAMUEL SPENCER'S ESTATE IS NOT A LARGE ONE

### Will Offered for Probate and the Wife Has Most of It During Her Life Time.

(By Associated Press.)  
WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 7.—Will of the late Samuel Spencer, president of the Southern company, was today admitted to probate.

All his household furniture, pictures, paintings, plate, horses and carriages are given to the widow, Mrs. Louisa Vivian Spencer, absolutely. Mrs. Spencer is also given the Tuxedo Park, Orange county, N. Y., residence and real estate.

The residue of the estate is to be divided into three parts, one of which is to be given absolutely to Mrs. Spencer; another share is to be held by the executors in trust for Mrs. Spencer during her life, and at her death to revert to the children of Mr. Spencer or any descendants of deceased children the remaining part of the estate is to be divided among the children.

The personal estate is given in excess of \$10,000 and the real estate is estimated at \$75,000.

## SCHOONER WRECKED OFF ASSATEAGUE

### She Was Bound From Norfolk to New York and Is Reported as a Total Loss.

(By Associated Press.)  
Philadelphia, Pa., Dec. 7.—The Assateague life saving station reported today that the three masted schooner, Florence J. Lockwood, from Norfolk to New York with a cargo of lumber stranded on (William) shoal off Assateague, Va., last night and is a total loss. Captain Taylor and his crew were rescued by the life savers. The schooner went aground during a heavy gale and quickly pounded to pieces in the heavy sea. The schooner was built at Norwalk, Conn., in 1867 and was owned by J. J. Smith, of Boston. The vessel was 103 feet long, had a beam of 3 feet and a depth of 14 feet.

## WASP WILL BE TRAVELING RECRUITING STATION

### Ship Now in Hampton Roads Will be Sent Down the Atlantic and to the Gulf.

(By Associated Press.)  
WASHINGTON, Dec. 7.—A traveling recruiting ship which at the same

time will serve as an object lesson to apprentices in the navy has been designated by the bureau of navigation to visit South Atlantic and gulf ports. For this purpose the department has utilized the converted yacht Wasp, until recently serving as a recruiting vessel at Newport.

It is hoped by the department that the plan will result in bringing into the navy a number of desirable young men who have never been induced to enter the service. The Wasp recently has been in Hampton Roads, and is ready for the trip down the coast.

## COMPLAINT AGAINST NORFOLK AND WESTERN

### Powhattan Coal and Coke Company Says That They Have Been Discriminated Against.

(By Associated Press.)  
WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 7.—The Powhattan Coal and Coke Company of West Virginia, has filed a complaint with the Interstate Commerce Commission against the Norfolk and Western company and about sixty coal and coke companies of West Virginia. The basis of the complaint is alleged discrimination against the coal and coke company in its system of car distribution, and that the defendant's coal and coke companies are given undue and unreasonable advantage in this regard.

## ANOTHER NIGHT AT FAIR.

### Enjoyable Time Spent by Merry-makers at First Presbyterian Church.

Another large crowd attended the "Colonial Fair" in the lecture room of the First Presbyterian church last night. The guests spent an enjoyable evening and the ladies in charge report that the affair has been successful from every standpoint. The fair will be open again this afternoon.

## MRS. BIRDSONG'S PLEA

### Mother-in-Law Testifies That She Showed Signs of Insanity.

## TROUBLEMAKER ON THE STAND

### Woman Who Witnessed the Killing of Dr. Butler Tells Story of the Mur- der—Accused Had Tried to End Her Life.

(By Associated Press.)  
HAZELHURST, MISS., Dec. 7.—With surprising rapidity the prosecution in the case of Mrs. Angie Birdsong, charged with the murder of Dr. Thomas Butler, completed its evidence today. Only a day and a half has been occupied in taking the testimony. Two leading points were aimed at by the prosecution. First, it was attempted to show that the act was deliberate and that she followed her already mortally wounded victim out of his office to the veranda where she adjusted her revolver, after he had pleaded for mercy and fired three shots at him. The second point of the prosecution was to prove Dr. Butler's good character.

The state's witness, Mrs. Nora Garrett, lived across the street from Dr. Butler. She testified that she saw the shooting, both in and outside and she heard the doctor cry out "Angie don't shoot me any more."

A moment later Dr. Butler exclaimed "My God, Angie, what will become of you when you die?"

The witness said that she herself called to Mrs. Birdsong to stop shooting. This witness said there was no truth in a report that she had informed Mrs. Birdsong of stories about the latter's character, alleged to have been circulated by Dr. Butler. The defense is insanity.

The defense immediately called as its first witness, the defendant's mother-in-law, Mrs. S. E. Birdsong. The latter testified that the defendant after the birth of her last child had shown signs of insanity, and that these symptoms were repeated about the time of the killing. The mother-in-law said that Mrs. Garrett, who had testified for the state, called upon Mrs. Birdsong a few days before the tragedy and that after her visitor's departure Mrs. Birdsong remarked that if she found that Dr. Butler had told all stories about her she would kill him. Witnesses said Mrs. Birdsong had been out at night only once during the period the stories referred to and then had come for medicine at witness' request. Other witnesses told of Mrs. Birdsong's attempt at suicide a few days before the shooting.

## S. E. Spencer Promoted.

JACKSONVILLE, FLA., Dec. 7.—S. E. Spencer has been promoted from the position of superintendent of terminals of the Atlantic Coast Line railroad to superintendent at Gainesville district, third division, succeeding A. L. Glass resigned. Headquarters of the district will be transferred to Jacksonville.

## HELD UP MUTUAL RESERVE FOR \$10,000

### Former Superintendent of Insur- ance of New York Received Check.

## GEORGE BURNHAM IS ON STAND

### George D. Eldridge Another Indicted Official Also Called by the Prosecu- tion at Yesterday's Hearings—Sen- ator Platt, of Course, Has No Recol- lection of the Payn Check.

(By Associated Press.)  
NEW YORK, Dec. 7.—At the trial today in the Supreme court of George Burnham, Jr., a vice-president of and counsel for the Mutual Reserve Life insurance company on a charge of larceny, a photograph for a check for \$10,000 was produced by the prosecution in the examination of the defendant, concerning a draft of \$100,000 alleged to have been made on the Mutual Reserve for the suppression of an unfavorable report when Louis F. Payn was New York state superintendent of insurance. The check was drawn on the Butchers and Drovers' National bank signed by Timothy Donovan and made payable to James Y. Watkins, as trustee and by him made payable to Charles P. and W. W. Bulkeley, attorneys, who in turn endorsed it over to Charles Payn or order. Subsequently it was endorsed by Payn to the credit of the United States Express company.

Burnham said he recognized the photograph as a reproduction of one of two cancelled checks which the late George D. Patterson, a clerk of the company's benevolent fund, had given him for safekeeping, an "which," he said, he returned to Patterson later.

Early in the day's session Justice Greenbaum ruled that it was competent for the prosecution to attempt to produce evidence bearing on the allegation that Payn while superintendent of insurance demanded \$100,000 from the Mutual Reserve. The prosecution in the present case alleges that President Frederick A. Burnham of the company satisfied the demand by making the payment of \$40,000. The defendant's cross examination was completed today and George D. Eldridge, vice-president, attorney and chairman of the Mutual Reserve company, who is also under indictment, took the stand. He had not concluded his testimony when court adjourned for the day.

## Platt Doesn't Remember.

Senator Platt, president of the United States Express company, when asked the details, regarding the \$10,000 check which was endorsed to the credit of his company by Louis F. Payn, the photograph of which was produced today in the trial of George Burnham, Jr., in the New York court, stated that he had no recollection of ever having seen such a check.

## HOLIDAY RECORDS FOR TRADE BEING BROKEN

### Unprecedented Demand for Christmas Goods Prevails Throughout the Country.

NEW YORK, Dec. 7.—It, G. Dunn and Company's weekly review of trade will say: "Lower temperature has stimulated retail trade in seasonable staples but interest is most conspicuous in holiday goods. Expectations for record breaking demand for Christmas specialties are being fully realized. Jobbing and wholesale houses are doing well for the season but reports of meagre collections show much irregularity. Improvements in the promptness of payments is expected when the crops have been more fully marketed and greater ease appears in the money rates, which are far above normal, despite the fact that the total amount in circulation exceeds all records. The movement of freights restricted by inadequate facilities is causing much trouble in the industries. Very little idle machinery is noticed in the factories and mills, except where the supply of labor and raw material is insufficient and the vigorous demand for all commodities is indicated by the highest level of prices in recent years. The closing month of the year in the condition of steel industries promises to fully maintain the phenomenal rate of progress that has been experienced during the autumn. Textile mills are operating a large percentage of the available machinery, although the inadequate supply of labor seems to be a drawback. Even after the recent reaction in price of raw material, the margin of prices in cotton goods is small and purchasers make little effort to secure concessions.